

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 MANILA 07496 170934Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----171247Z 036060 /47
R 170735Z MAY 77
FM AMEMBASSY MANILA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9828

C O N F I D E N T I A L MANILA 7496

EXDIS

FOR HOLBROOKE

E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SHUM, RP
SUBJECT: MRS. MARCOS' COMMENTS ON HUMAN RIGHTS

1. MANILA HAS BEEN THE SCENE, FROM MAY 14 TO 17, OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF MANUFACTURERS HANOVER TRUST, A BANK WITH A CLOSE RELATIONSHIP TO THE GOP, DATING PARTICULARLY FROM THE PHILIPPINE FINANCIAL CRISIS OF 1969-70. MEMBERS OF THE BOARD WERE ON THE RECEIVING END OF FIRST FAMILY HOSPITALITY BEGINNING WITH DEPARTURE OF THE PRESIDENTIAL YACHT TO CORREGIDOR AND BATAAN AT 7:15 A.M. MAY 15 AND ENDING WITH DINNER AT THE PALACE, WHICH EXTENDED INTO THE WEE HOURS OF MAY 16.

2. CHARGE PRESENTED BRIEFING TO BREAKFAST MEETING OF BOARD ON MAY 16, AND INCLUDED COMMENTS ON HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE. FOLLOWING MEETING, MEMBER OF THE BOARD, J. PAUL LYET, CHAIRMAN OF SPERRY RAND, TOLD EMBASSY OFFICER THAT MRS. MARCOS HAD ON PREVIOUS DAY GIVEN SPIRITED DELIVERY OF HER OPINIONS ON THE HERRERA CASE AND US/PHILIPPINE RELATIONS GENERALLY AT TABLE WHICH INCLUDED TWO OTHER MEMBERS OF BOARD. LYET REQUESTED THAT HIS REMARKS BE KEPT IN CONFIDENCE.

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3. ACCORDING TO LYET, MRS. MARCOS CLAIMED HEATEDLY THAT MRS. HERRERA IS A COMMUNIST AND A PROFESSIONAL AT ATTRACTING ATTENTION. SHE HAD BURNED HER OWN FINGERS, EMPLOYED THE USUAL TACTIC OF ACCUSING HER CAPTORS, AND THE WESTERN MEDIA HAD PICKED IT UP. MRS. MARCOS SAID THAT SHE WAS AGAINST RELEASING THE WOMAN AND SACRIFICING THE LIEUTENANT WHO STANDS ACCUSED OF TORTURE AND HAD SO COUNSELED PRES. MARCOS.

4. MRS. MARCOS THEN NOTED THAT PRESIDENT CARTER HAD SENT A LETTER TO MARCOS, ASKING IF DETAINEE BENIGNO AQUINO COULD BE RELEASED TO TAKE UP AN APPOINTMENT AT HARVARD. SHE SAID THAT PRESIDENT MARCOS IS DETERMINED TO LEAVE THE AQUINO MATTER TO THE COURTS, AND THAT EVEN IF FOUND GUILTY, MARCOS WOULD EXTEND A PARDON.

5. LYET SAID THAT MRS. MARCOS PROFESSED HERSELF "DUMFOUNDED" THAT THE U.S. SUPPORTS DEDICATED COMMUNISTS. ON A THEME WHICH SHE REPORTEDLY PURSUED AT SOME LENGTH AND IN LARGER AUDIENCES DURING THE DAY, MRS. MARCOS REMARKED THAT THE PHILIPPINES HAS BEEN A GOOD FRIEND TO THE U.S., BUT THAT THE U.S. SEEMS TO HAVE A TENDENCY TO TREAT ITS FRIENDS WORSE THAN ITS ENEMIES.

6. MRS. MARCOS ALSO MADE A FASCINATING REFERENCE TO THE RECENT CALL ON SUHARTO BY ASSISTANT SECRETARY HOLBROOKE. HER VERSION WAS THAT HOLBROOKE HAD PRESSED FOR THE RELEASE OF 1000 INDONESIAN PRISONERS, WHOM SHE SAID ARE HARD-CORE COMMUNISTS, AND HAD RAISED THE POSSIBILITY OF WITHDRAWAL OF U.S. AID. AFTER THE CALL, SUHARTO HAD IMMEDIATELY TELEPHONED MARCOS AND ALERTED HIM TO THE POSSIBILITY THAT HOLBROOKE WOULD RAISE THIS MATTER IN MANILA.

7. REFLECTING ON THE EXPERIENCE, LYET SAID THAT MRS. MARCOS APPARENTLY HAD A TENDENCY TO "EMBELLISH" THE FACTS, BUT THAT HE WAS IMPRESSED WITH THE FORCE AND CONVICTION OF HER STATEMENTS. OVERALL, LYET SAID THAT HE (AND HE BELIEVED CONFIDENTIAL

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HIS COLLEAGUES) HAVE COME TO AN APPRECIATION OF THE COMPLEXITY OF HUMAN RIGHTS DURING THEIR THREE-DAY STAY, AND THAT THE SITUATION IS NOT BLACK AND WHITE, WHICH IS "THE PICTURE ONE GETS FROM THE NEW YORK TIMES."

8. DEPT MAY WISH TO REPEAT TO JAKARTA.
STULL

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: HUMAN RIGHTS, COMMUNISTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 17-May-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 22 May 2009
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977MANILA07496
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770174-1247
Format: TEL
From: MANILA
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770549/aaaabqer.tel
Line Count: 104
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 2f7f3d92-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 23-Feb-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2488588
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MRS. MARCOS' COMMENTS ON HUMAN RIGHTS
TAGS: SHUM, PINS, RP, (MARCOS, IMELDA), (HERRERA, TRINIDAD)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/2f7f3d92-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009